



Artist Adam Cvijanovic, left, listens as Cardinal Timothy Dolan speaks during a media preview of the 25-foot-high mural, the largest artwork ever commissioned for St. Patrick's Cathedral, in New York, Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025. (AP/Richard Drew)

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New York's iconic St. Patrick's Cathedral is unveiling a massive new mural that honors the city's immigrants.

Spanning the sides to the Manhattan landmark's entryway, the 25-foot-tall (7.6-meter-tall) artwork of everyday immigrants and notable historical figures comes amid a [federal crackdown on immigration](#) that has divided many communities across the country.

The piece was not intended as a political message, according to Fr. Enrique Salvo, the Roman Catholic church's rector, but nevertheless sends a message.

"We want anyone that comes in to feel loved and welcomed," said Salvo, who is himself an immigrant from Nicaragua. "It's a reminder that it doesn't matter what's happening ... politically. We have to treat everyone with love and respect."

The work, titled "What's So Funny About Peace, Love, and Understanding," also just brightens up the space for the 6 million visitors that come into the church every year, said Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York who commissioned the piece.

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"It was very drab," Dolan told reporters Thursday of the old entryway ahead of the mural's official unveiling at Sunday Mass. "So, we thought at least we need to spark it up and get some illumination."

The mural, by local artist Adam Cvijanovic, in part honors Irish immigrants who contributed to the cathedral's construction. One section depicts the Apparition at Knock, in which, according to Catholic lore, the saints Mary, Joseph and John the Evangelist appeared to locals in the Irish village in 1879 — the same year, Dolan noted, the cathedral opened its doors. Elsewhere, Irish immigrants are seen arriving on a ship.

Other scenes show modern-day migrants alongside famous local figures, including journalist and social activist Dorothy Day, Pierre Toussaint, a former slave from Haiti who became a major philanthropist in the city, and former New York Gov. Alfred Smith, the first Roman Catholic to receive a major-party nomination for president.

Cvijanovic said it was also important to him to represent Native Americans in the piece, which features [St. Kateri Tekakwitha](#), the first Native American saint.

Dolan praised the painter for creating what he described as "an effusive ode to the greatness of this city and those who came here, and those who have turned into their leaders."